

**DR. PAMELA POWELL ELECTED
VICE CHAIR OF FTF BOARD**

Dr. Pamela Powell has been elected vice chair of the FTF Board to replace Dr. Eugene Thompson, who is in the process of moving out of state.

Board members expressed their respect and admiration for the extensive expertise in early childhood Dr. Powell brings to the Board.

Dr. Powell spent more than two decades as an elementary school teacher prior to arriving at Northern Arizona University. Currently, she is dedicated to helping pre-service teachers learn to utilize current, inclusive, and developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms, which promote better learning for all students.

Dr. Powell received her bachelor's degree from Texas Tech University in Elementary Education, her Master's degree from Arizona State University in Elementary Education, with a specialization in reading, and a doctorate from Northern Arizona University in Curriculum and Instruction, with a focus on Early Childhood Education.

As an Associate Professor of Literacy and Early Childhood in the NAU College of Education, Dr. Powell and her students frequently participate in practicum experiences in schools in the Flagstaff Unified School District and in child development centers in the area.

In addition, she is very involved in the promotion of quality early learning opportunities for all children in the Arizona and our nation. She helped develop summer conferences and institutes in the NAU College of Education for early childhood educators across the state, which have provided a venue for continued conversation regarding quality early learning environments. She also is Northern Arizona AEYC's policy chair, AzAEYC Board's member at large, and participates on various early childhood committees and taskforces at NAU, in the Flagstaff community, and the state of Arizona.

"I am humbled and honored; I will serve in my best capacity," Powell said after the election. "Thank you for this opportunity."

**REGIONAL BOUNDARY TASKFORCE
MEETS NEXT IN TUCSON**

By statute, the FTF Board may re-examine its regions every two years to determine whether changes are needed or desired in order to better meet the needs of kids 5 and younger throughout Arizona.

This year, a taskforce has been appointed to carry out this important task, co-chaired by Jack Jewett, President and CEO of the Flinn Foundation and former FTF Board member, and Dr. Judy Jolley Mohraz, President and CEO of the Virginia G. Piper Charitable Trust.

The taskforce has met twice already and will meet two more times before providing its recommendations to the state Board.

The issues the taskforce is dealing with are varied. In some regions, there may be questions about whether a particular community or ZIP code would be better served by another region. In the large metropolitan areas, the issue may be whether more regions are needed or whether consolidation would yield better results for young kids.

The next meeting of the task force is scheduled for February 19 from 1 to 3 p.m. at the City of Tucson's Sentinel Building, Rillito and Sabino Rooms, 320 N. Commerce Park Loop.



REPORT DETAILS SUCCESSES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN IMPROVING COMPENSATION & CREDENTIALS OF EARLY EDUCATORS

Research demonstrates that when child care and other early learning programs are of high quality and developmentally appropriate, children score higher on school readiness measures and do better in school. They also have better relationships with their peers and are more likely to graduate.

But the quality of early care and education depends on the professionalism, education and skills of the teacher. The 2012 Early Care and Education Workforce Survey – first administered in Arizona in 1997 and subsequently in 2001, 2004 and 2007 – provides a basis for better understanding evolving characteristics and conditions of Arizona's early care and education workforce. The most recent survey, conducted in 2012 and funded by FTF, is the basis for the summary on the status of Arizona's early childhood workforce.

The survey shows that – while early childhood teachers and assistant teachers are earning more college degrees – Arizona continues to struggle in two of the areas impacting retention of skilled early educators: wages and benefits.

Teacher turnover in the early care and education field remains high; averaging 30 percent or more. A national study found that teacher turnover is highest in child care centers with lower wages and lower levels of teacher education. The early care and education workforce is among the most poorly paid professionals in the United States, with the median wages for child care workers and preschool teachers being between \$7.90 and \$9.53 per hour.

Nationally, this is nearly one half of the salary earned by a kindergarten teacher, and lower than wages for parking attendants, cooks or cashiers.

This report explains the importance of a skilled early childhood workforce to educational success, examines the current qualifications and compensation of our state's early childhood teachers, and suggests ways that early learning program providers and policymakers can enhance school readiness for all kids by supporting efforts to ensure that Arizona's best educators are where they can make the biggest impact: with our youngest kids.

The full report will be available in the Board materials at aztf.gov, Attachment 9.

T.E.A.C.H. MODEL ASSESSED; IMPROVEMENTS RECOMMENDED

In 2009, as part of ongoing efforts to build a comprehensive and coordinated early childhood system that ensures all of Arizona's children are ready for school and set for life, First Things First selected the T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® Project for Arizona.

T.E.A.C.H. is an acronym for Teacher Education And Compensation Helps and it is a nationally recognized, comprehensive scholarship program that provides the early childhood workforce with access to educational opportunities.

The Association for Supportive Child Care (ASCC), through funding from First Things First, operates T.E.A.C.H. Early Childhood® ARIZONA. The target population for T.E.A.C.H. scholarships are those early childhood professionals who are completing coursework in early childhood education while working in licensed and regulated center-based early care and education programs and family child care homes participating in Quality First.

After three years of implementation of the T.E.A.C.H. project in Arizona, with results that did not reach expected target service units and with significantly lower expenditures than budgeted, the Board requested that First Things First staff analyze the research and data and examine the efficacy, compatibility and suitability of the T.E.A.C.H. model and its connections within Quality First and the larger statewide professional development system.

Cami Ehler, FTF Program Specialist for Early Learning, told the Board that the assessment discovered some gaps in the way T.E.A.C.H. was being implemented, including: Quality First programs are not always prioritized for outreach, providers do not fully understand T.E.A.C.H. and its benefits to their programs; and, T.E.A.C.H. scholars do not receive enough academic advice and support.

Ehler said FTF has already started working with ASCC to implement strategies to address these issues, including making QF centers and homes a priority for outreach, improvements to how ASCC is managing recruitment and outreach, new positions to provide ore support for scholars and a more realistic growth trajectory for the program, given the experiences of other states.

In continuing to fund the T.E.A.C.H. model, Ehler also recommended adjustments to the financing model based on actual per-scholar expenditures, and working with the community colleges to provide additional support to help scholars succeed.

The Board accepted FTF staff recommendations. The full report is in the Board materials at aztf.gov, Attachment 10.



FRAMEWORK PRESENTED TO BUILD ARIZONA'S EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

The Arizona Professional Development System-Building Workgroup (PDSBWG) is a working group of The BUILD Initiative, Arizona; convened and staffed by FTF. This report describes a model early childhood professional development system, the work

of the PDSBWG, and the recommendations for five system-building initiatives to be developed and implemented over the next two years.

The framework includes:

- the development of an advisory or governance structure;
- the development of workforce competencies to complement existing professional standards;
- steps to improve credentialing, including the development of an associate's degree in early childhood, and the development of a Prior Learning Assessment so that early childhood professionals can get college credit for existing knowledge;
- implementation of a professional workforce registry so that data can be used to continuously improve the early childhood workforce;
- the creation of a cross-sector coordinating body to oversee professional development funds and ensure that investments, policies and decisions are not made in silos; and,
- the development of a statewide website and registry to provide a statewide, centralized mechanism for disseminating information about workshops and community-based professional development and to assist in the gathering data about the early childhood workforce.

The two-year strategic plan the accompanied the recommendations, describes each of the recommended initiatives, the major deliverables and timelines, and the funding sources for each.

The full report is available in the Board materials at aztf.gov, Attachment 11.

Save the date! The next FTF Board meeting will be held April 8-9 in Payson.